

# WHO WILL BE THE NEXT PLANNING BOARD CHAIRMAN?



**Profiles and Story by Jennifer Lenhart**

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# From Candidates, Competing County Plans

## Officials Plan to Select New Chairman Next Month

By JENNIFER LUNHART  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Nine residents seeking to become the next chairman of the Montgomery County Planning Board have been interviewed in recent days by the County Council.

Officials will wait until next month, however, to select a replacement for Derick P. Berlage to head the county's most powerful, appointed board, said Council President George L. Leventhal (D-At Large).

The next few weeks will give civic groups time to evaluate applicants and forward endorsements or recommendations, Leventhal said. Applicants have received questionnaires from the Montgomery County Civic Federation, which has hosted community forums for appli-

cants in the past but has not scheduled anything for this year.

"I've allowed extra time in the process. How long depends on what I hear about what the community wants to do," Leventhal said. "I won't schedule a vote until I have reasonable indication that anybody who wants to hold a forum gets to hold one."

Dan Wilhelm, immediate past president of the Montgomery County Civic Federation, is leading the group's ad hoc committee in charge of evaluating applicants.

"We're going to provide a recommendation to the council on the ones that we think are qualified," Wilhelm said. "We may rank them. As for a forum, we haven't decided what exactly we're going to do."

The Planning Board chairman, who works full time and is paid up to \$150,000, oversees the county Department of Parks and Planning and its \$100 million budget. The department's reputation was tarnished last year after a com-

munity group found building irregularities in Clarksburg Town Center, a 1,200-home community under construction north of Germantown.

The controversy led to an overhaul of planning policies and the resignation of five high-ranking planning officials, including Berlage, 49, a lawyer and former County Council member.

In all, 14 people applied for Berlage's job. Application packets were circulated to council members, along with a checklist for the council to indicate whom they wanted to interview. Applicants who received at least three votes were invited for an interview.

Those interviewed included three associated with the Planning Board: member John M. Robinson, a federal government lawyer; Royce Hanson, a 1970s-era board chairman who provided the council with a review of the department after Clarksburg; and Michele M. Rosenfeld, former lead counsel of the planning

department and one of the people who resigned.

Wendell M. Holloway, appointed by the council to the Board of Appeals in 2004, also applied. Holloway, who is paid \$14,000 annually, helps make decisions about zoning requests that vary from county development standards.

Applicants not interviewed were: Gerald R. Gichy, 67, a Rockville engineer and planner; Richard L. Claypoole, 61, of Silver Spring, former director, Office of the Federal Register; Tia Booker Rutherford, 31, a planner and consultant in Columbia, S.C.; Shelton "Shelly" Skolnick, 63, a Silver Spring engineer and lawyer; and Thomas C. Snyder, 51, of Ellicott City, a consultant on energy and environmental policy.

*Today's Extra includes biographical information on the interviewed applicants and excerpts from their applications explaining their reasons for seeking the position. For complete applications, go to [www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov), and click on County Council.*

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## MONTGOMERY

Montgomery Extra Section

6/22/2006

## Devin L. Battley

Age: 55

Residence: Derwood

**Occupation:** President and "director of happiness," Rockville Harley-Davidson Inc.  
**Experience:** President of Lindbergh Park Owners Association, a Gaithersburg business park; member, Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce Transportation and Land Use Committee; member, Muncaster Area Civic Association; member, Leadership Montgomery Class of 2006; founder and director of Rides for Peace, a nonprofit organization for motorcycle charity rides.

**Excerpt:** I have received overwhelming encouragement from family, friends, neighbors, business associates, colleagues and LM [Leadership Montgomery] classmates to apply. I am also motivated because of my spirit of community service.



I am not going to spell out my agenda for the MNCPPC [Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission] in this letter. My agenda will be better provided and expressed during the interview process. I am also asking that you interview

## Wendell M. Holloway

Age: 73

Residence: Potomac

**Occupation:** Serving for the second time as a member of the Montgomery County Board of Appeals, a panel appointed by the County Council and paid annual salaries to hold hearings and make decisions about zoning requests at variance from county development standards, served 1996-1999 and appointed again in 2004; vice president of government relations for Suburban Hospital Healthcare System, 2000-2003; lobbyist for Ford Motor Co., 1978-1994; United States Air Force, 1954-1974.

**Experience:** Member of Tuskegee Airmen International, the Cosmos Club in Washington, D.C., and Sigma Pi Phi fraternity. Democratic activist in county, state and national political campaigns, and a candi-



date in 1986 for Maryland's 8th District congressional seat. He lost in the Democratic primary.

**Excerpt:** Recent events have convinced me that this unit of county government needs an experienced administrator that is

## Alan S. Bowser

Age: 53

Residence: Silver Spring

**Occupation:** Lawyer and economist in private practice in Silver Spring and president of Georgetown Television Network Inc., a nonprofit organization involved in making programs on law and public policy for public television.

**Experience:** Deputy assistant secretary in the Department of Commerce International Trade Administration, 1999-2001; board operations officer at the World Bank, 1989-1999; chairman, neighborhoods committee, Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board; member, Park Hills Civic Association; member, Silver Spring community forum on youth violence and gangs.

**Excerpt:** I would like, in this letter, to address some of the issues that Chairman Derick Berlage raised in his very thoughtful letter to the council earlier this year. I be-



lieve that the chairman's letter is a very important reference point for the council and the planning board as we consider our next steps, because in many areas of policy and process, *continuity* is key. While

## John M. Robinson

Age: 61

Residence: Kensington

**Occupation:** Lawyer, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 1989-present.

**Experience:** Member, Montgomery County Planning since 2001; current term expires next year; partner, law firm of Sharp and Robinson, 1985-1988; senior attorney and chief of the rail competition branch, Interstate Commerce Commission, 1976-1980; member, Washington Area Housing Partnership executive board.

**Excerpt:** The fact that I currently serve on the board has substantial benefits in addition to some perceived negatives. The main benefit is that the experience of the last five years provides essential continuity.



day management of the staff is left to the senior staff, who report to the board and the chair. But, these are not normal circumstances. As such, it would be helpful if the chairman had walked in the shoes of

Under normal circumstances, all day-to-

## Art Brodsky

Age: 53

Residence: Olney

**Occupation:** Communications director for Public Knowledge, a nonprofit organization in Washington specializing in telecommunications and intellectual property.

**Experience:** Executive vice president, Greater Olney Civic Association, 2005-present; president of the association, 2001-02.

**Excerpt:** Over several years of civic work, I have had the chance to gain significant insights into the planning process. . . . It is with this background that I have come to believe that a new approach to not only choosing the planning board chairman but to planning itself is needed.

We have reached a point at which we need to ask whether some of our philosophies, processes and institutions may have reached the end of their useful lives, and so we need to look to new directions.



One good place to start is with the zoning code. We have reached a point at which the federal tax code is a model of clarity compared with our zoning code, a view validated by outside consultants. We

## Michele M. Rosenfeld

Age: 44

Residence: Potomac

**Occupation:** Associate general counsel for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 1996-2006, supervising the Montgomery County Planning Board's legal offices; served as Planning Board staff attorney seven years prior to becoming lead counsel, resigned in April.

**Experience:** Extensive legal work for the Montgomery County Planning Board; zoning decisions for the Montgomery County Board of Appeals as a special assistant in 1988; staff attorney for the National Association of Home Builders.

**Excerpt:** The next chairman will have to work hard against long odds to restore public confidence in the agency, in-



stitutional competence and employee morale. The next chairman will have to do all of this in a complicated political arena where it has become apparent that there exist some major misunderstandings or

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## William R. Dodge

Age: 65

Residence: Bethesda

**Occupation:** Owner of Regional Excellence Consulting, a firm specializing in regional cooperation issues; interim town administrator in Silverton, Colo., September 2005 through January 2006.

**Experience:** Former director of the Department of Planning and Development for Allegheny County, Pa.; executive director of the National Association of Regional Councils in Washington, D.C., 1997-2001; member of the American Society for Public Administration's section on intergovernmental administration and management; fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration, established by Congress to study management of public institutions; author of several books on strategic planning.

**Excerpt:** I am willing to be considered for a full, four-year term, but would also encourage you to consider me for an interim, 12- to 24-month appointment.

I believe that an interim appointment would be especially timely. It would allow me to focus on making the changes that are necessary to stop the hemorrhaging and rebuild the capacity of park and planning staff. It would also allow me to guide the implementation of the sometimes controversial improvements that are often difficult for an individual with a full, four-year term to make. At the end of the interim appointment, I would welcome your evaluation of my performance and would be willing to be considered for a full, four-year term.



My career has focused on rebuilding government organizations and breathing life into new ones, especially the organizations that are facing the tough challenges that shape our communities' futures. Now, I am at a stage in life where my primary desire is to apply the wisdom that I have acquired to making Montgomery County, and the world, a better place to leave our children.

In the past, the Planning Board and its staff earned an enviable reputation for excellence, including national recognition for its master plans and innovative approaches for affordable housing and preserving farm land. . . . The Planning Board and its staff have the potential to achieve excellence again.

## David C. Gardner

Age: 51

Residence: Ashton

**Occupation:** Lawyer in private, general litigation practice in Rockville; experienced in personal injury, domestic, criminal and zoning law. Represents businesses in zoning applications and community associations in zoning disputes.

**Experience:** Former president and vice president of the Greater Olney Civic Association; chairman of the Montgomery County Commission on Common Ownership Communities, 1992-2002; Member of the Ashton-Sandy Spring Master Plan citizens advisory committee, 1993-1997; youth hockey and soccer coach.

**Excerpt:** As an attorney and civic leader who has represented both applicants and civic groups opposing development projects, I have an understanding of the issues and concerns on both sides of the development debate. I have gained an appreciation for the rights of landowners to develop, as well as the needs and concerns of citizens to ensure that development is compatible with the existing community.

. . . I believe Montgomery County has done an excellent job in adopting master plans which serve as guides to development without becoming so specific that they straitjacket developers. However, as the county increasingly looks to flexible planning tools . . . there will become an increasing need to provide guidance in the plans as to the type, location and appearance of development in these zones. . . .



Too many of our highways and primary residential streets were constructed without safe sidewalks. While these may be shown on our master plans, I believe the public should not have to wait for development to arrive before it has safe places for its children to walk or ride their bikes. Therefore, I believe construction of these should be accelerated. . . .

Montgomery County has long prided itself on its efforts to provide moderately priced, affordable housing to people who could not otherwise live in our county. This needs to remain a high priority and means must be found to ensure that such housing is not just discussed, but built.

## Royce Hanson

Age: 74

Residence: Montgomery Village

**Occupation:** Professor and director, Center for Washington Area Studies, George Washington Institute of Public Policy, the George Washington University. Author of several dozen scholarly books and articles on growth and planning.

**Experience:** Chairman of the Montgomery County Planning Board, 1972-1981; critiqued the Planning Board and planning policy for the Montgomery County Council after zoning irregularities surfaced in 2005 in Clarksburg Town Center; chairman of the board of trustees of the Maryland Environmental Trust and co-chairman of Montgomery's Advisory Committee on Legacy Open Space.

**Excerpt:** During the 1970s, he chaired the Montgomery County Planning Board of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, providing the leadership for the establishment of one of the nation's most comprehensive and effective growth management systems. Under his leadership, Montgomery County adopted innovative new sector plans and regulations to manage development of its business districts and transit station areas, the area's first adequate public facilities ordinance, a plan for historic preservation and its agriculture reserve.



. . . In 1987, he was selected dean and professor of political economy of the School of Social Sciences at the University of Texas at Dallas.

In 1998, Hanson joined the faculty of the policy sciences graduate program of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and also served as interim director of the Center for Urban Environmental Research and Education. He conducted research on urban sprawl, smart growth policy, state recreation needs and the civic engagement of corporate leaders.

Hanson is a fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration, recently chairing panels that recommended reforms in National Park Service construction systems, management of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and management of the U.S. Park Police. He is a member of the Maryland Bar.

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## Battley

me first since my plans and ideas will help you during the selection process.

I believe my qualifications for this position are immense. I am a strong leader and first-class manager, and I

am a first-class motivator and facilitator, and I am great at getting along with people in any environment. I have taken my position as director of happiness at Rockville Harley-Davidson seriously, and what our MNCPPC needs is some happiness. Even though I do not possess certificates of higher education, my life report card shows that I have achieved the highest levels of

success in life. One measure is that I began my economic life in the first percentile of net worth; I am now and have been for years in the 99th percentile. You will find my scientific, economic, environmental, legal, medical, historic, geographic, accounting, etc. knowledge incredible. I am confident that I would do an outstanding job as chairman.

## Bowser

I strongly believe that we need new leadership at the planning board. I also strongly believe that we need to build on the good work that the commission has done for many years. . . .

I also share the commitment to smart growth and the idea that 'great

urban design — focused on great transit, pedestrian safety and convenience, green space, public amenities, arts and culture — is the future for our transit station areas in Shady Grove, Glenmont and Wheaton.'

I share the view that the county's regulatory process must be up to the task of 21st-century development and that 'community input and transparent decision making are more important than ever.'

Mr. Berlage stated his intention to deliver . . . earlier and more inclusive community input on virtually every decision made by park and planning, effective protection of the agriculture reserve; reform of the development review process; a vision for revitalizing older commercial centers and the implementation tools to regulate new construction effectively. . . .

I embrace all of these critically important goals.

## Brodsky

should take a fresh look not only at how the code is organized and changed, but whether we are ready for some fundamental changes. . . .

The most basic building block of our system is the master plan. From the name, one would think that it has the force of a cohesive idea for a particular

region. In reality, it would be more properly described as a Master Suggestion, or even a Master Idea Subject to Change With Little More Than A Whim. . . .

We should look as well to the rather Byzantine process by which a development is approved. Between preliminary plans, preliminary plans, site plans, subdivision plans, development review sessions, forestry plans and historic reviews, there are many

steps at which mischief can occur as a project moves through the planning process largely out of public view. . . .

It has been my experience that the purpose of the Planning Board (and the council) has been to work with a developer to find a way for a project to become reality. That may have been acceptable in an era in which there was considerable land for development. . . . We must become more skeptical of projects and more demanding of developers.

## Holloway

familiar with managing both public and private forces. I believe that I have all

of the qualifications for this assignment and I believe that I could be an active force that could ensure that our citizens get the very best services available.

My 'bottom line' is that this interest is a direct result of having enjoyed a

very happy history in our county. My family also received great benefits from the life experiences they shared here and still treasure. If I can spend a few years giving something back to this community we love, I will be both pleased and grateful.

## Robinson

the staff in many areas — administrative, conceptual, technical and legal. Ever since I joined the board, I have had this type of close and supportive working relationship with the staff, even given its more difficult moments.

The major issue facing the Planning

Board in the next several years is not its vision for the county. While this important matter finds expression in concerns about the agricultural reserve and the increasing urbanization of the county, these matters are on the board's agenda and the work is well underway. However, principal focus must be on achieving further improvement in the board's analytical procedures and in the quality of its decision making.

This requires further attention to the

five matters I stated in my reappointment interview in June 2005: (1) clear definitions and delegations of authority; (2) an improved supervisory structure; (3) improved administrative procedures for handling individual regulatory proceedings; (4) continued improvement in the staff reports; and (5) greater certainty and skill in the exercise of discretion in the determining complex land use issue facing the board.

## Rosenfeld

disagreements about what the Planning Board's appropriate role in this county should be — both with respect to planning and parks. . . .

So in order to fix these problems, it will be necessary to depoliticize the agency. This will not be an easy task. But unless it is done, it will be impos-

sible to restore public confidence in the agency's work and, by extension, in the Montgomery County planning process in general. It is easy to see the advantages of political control of Park and Planning. It is helpful to have an agency to blame when you misstep. It is useful to have an agency that will give you 'objective' advice that just happens to justify the political result you desire. . . .

But these political advantages come at a cost. One cost is the loss of public

confidence in the integrity of the agency's work. A second cost is the loss to the council of truly objective planning advice at a time when the council is making many momentous decisions that will affect the pattern of growth in this county for decades to come. . . .

Ultimately, I believe, the cost will be the existence of Park and Planning itself. An agency that can't fulfill its mission to provide frank and comprehensive land use advice to the council on an as-needed basis is useless.